

November 2014



Missouri FSA Updates

Missouri Farm Service Agency

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Please contact your local FSA
Office for questions specific to
your operation or county.

Crop Reporting Dates for Hay, Pasture and Fall-Seeded Small Grains

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers that all 2015 perennial and biennial forage crops, such as pasture acreage intended for haying or grazing, must be reported to FSA by Nov. 15. Since Nov. 15 falls on a weekend, reports will be accepted through Monday, Nov. 17.

All fall-seeded small grain acreage, including winter wheat and barley, must be reported by Dec. 15.

FSA changed crop acreage reporting dates in 2012 as the result of a combined effort of FSA and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to make acreage reporting easier and standardized for crop insurance and FSA purposes. All acreage must be reported for a farm, including crops on non-cropland, such as hayed or grazed grassland and other cover crops to ensure producers are compliant with current and future FSA farm programs.

Key Dates for FSA 2014 Farm Bill Programs

USDA announced key dates for farm owners and producers regarding the new 2014 Farm Bill programs, Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC). The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC:

- **Sept. 29, 2014 to Feb. 27, 2015:** Land owners may visit their local Farm Service Agency office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- **Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015:** Producers make a one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- **Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015:** Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- **October 2015:** Payments for 2014 crop year, if earned.

Online tools to assist in the decision process allow farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. The new tools are now available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Farm Service Agency, along with University of Missouri Extension, will be conducting Farm Bill informational meetings in various locations throughout the state. Please contact your local FSA office for more information, or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/mo for a listing of upcoming meetings. Check back frequently as future dates will be added.

County Committee Elections

USDA encourages farmers and ranchers to make their voices heard by voting in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections. Eligible producers across the country should have received their ballot for the 2014 election. Producers must return ballots to their local FSA offices by the Dec. 1, 2014, deadline to ensure their vote is counted. Mailed ballots must be postmarked no later than Dec. 1, 2014.

FSA County Committee members provide an important link between the local agricultural community and USDA. Farmers and ranchers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity support programs; conservation programs; indemnity and disaster programs; emergency programs and eligibility. County committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and ranchers must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

Eligible voters who have not received a ballot may pick one up at their local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Newly elected committee members and their alternates will take office Jan. 1, 2015.

More information on county committees, such as the new 2014 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. You may also contact your local USDA Service Center or FSA office. Visit <http://go.usa.gov/pYV3> to find an FSA office near you.

Microloan Cap Grows to \$50,000

Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the FSA borrowing limit for microloans increased from \$35,000 to \$50,000. Microloans offer borrowers simplified lending with less paperwork.

The microloan change allows beginning, small and mid-sized farmers to access an additional \$15,000 in loans using a simplified application process with up to seven years to repay. Microloans are part of USDA's continued commitment to [small and midsized farming operations](#).

To complement the microloan program additional changes to FSA eligibility requirements will help beginning farmers and ranchers access to land, a key barrier to entry level producers. FSA policies related to farm experience have changed so that other types of skills may be considered to meet the direct farming experience required for farm ownership loan eligibility. Operation or management of non-farm businesses, leadership positions while serving in the military or advanced education in an agricultural field will now count towards the experience applicants need to show when applying for farm ownership loans.

Since 2010, FSA has made a record amount of farm loans — more than 165,000 loans totaling nearly \$23 billion. More than 50 percent of USDA's farm loans now go to beginning farmers. In addition, FSA has increased its lending to socially-disadvantaged producers by nearly 50 percent since 2010.

Please review the [FSA Microloan Program Fact Sheet](#) for program application, eligibility and related information.

USDA Extends Dairy Margin Protection Program Deadlines

Enrollment Continues Through Dec. 5; Comments Accepted Until Dec. 15

USDA extended the deadline for the dairy Margin Protection Program. Farmers now have until Dec. 5, 2014. Farmers can enroll in the voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, to receive financial assistance when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Producers are encouraged to use the online Web resource at www.fsa.usda.gov/mpptool to calculate the best levels of coverage for their dairy operation. The secure website can be accessed via computer, smartphone or tablet.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) also extended the opportunity for public comments on both the Margin Protection Program and the Dairy Product Donation Program until Dec. 15, 2014. Comments can be submitted to USDA via the regulations.gov website at <http://go.usa.gov/GJSA>.

Farm Bill Allows Early Termination for Certain CRP Contracts

The 2014 Farm Bill requires USDA to offer a limited number of producers the opportunity to opt-out of certain CRP contracts during fiscal year 2015 if those contracts have been in effect for at least five years.

The 2014 Farm Bill specifies that the following types of land will not be eligible for opt-out:

- Filterstrips, waterways, strips adjacent to riparian areas, windbreaks, and shelterbelts;
- Land with an erodibility index of more than 15;
- Land devoted to hardwood trees;
- Wildlife habitat, duck nesting habitat, pollinator habitat, upland bird habitat buffer, wildlife food plots, State acres for wildlife enhancement, shallow water areas for wildlife, and rare and declining habitat;
- Farmable wetland and restored wetland;
- Land that contains diversions, erosion control structures, flood control structures, contour grass strips, living snow fences, salinity reducing vegetation, cross wind trap strips, and sediment retention structures;
- Land located within a federally designated wellhead protection area;
- Land that is covered by an easement under CRP;
- Land located within an average width, according to the applicable Natural Resources Conservation Service field office technical guide, of a perennial stream or permanent water body; and
- Land enrolled under the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

Once a CRP contract termination request is approved by the FSA County Committee, the decision may not be reversed and the terminated contract will not be reinstated. Once the land is no longer considered under the CRP contract participants must meet HEL/WC and other conservation compliance provisions for all associated lands.

For more information or to verify eligibility for early termination (opt-out) for existing CRP contracts, please contact your local FSA office. For local FSA Service Center contact information, please visit: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>.

Loans for Socially Disadvantaged Applicants

FSA has a number of loan programs available to assist applicants to begin or continue in agriculture production. Loans are available for operating, farm purchases, and farm or ranch improvements. While all qualified producers are eligible to apply for these loan programs, the FSA has provided priority funding for members of socially disadvantaged applicants.

A socially disadvantaged applicant is one of a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice because of his or her identity as members of the group without regard to his or her individual qualities.

For purposes of this program, socially disadvantaged groups are women, African Americans, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

FSA loans are only available to applicants who meet all the eligibility requirements and are unable to obtain the needed credit elsewhere.

Farm Bill Resources

For the latest on 2014 Farm Bill programs administered by FSA, please visit our Farm Bill website at www.fsa.usda.gov/farmbill and for an FSA program overview please read, download and/or print our recently posted FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet titled, [What's in the 2014 Farm Bill for Farm Service Agency Customers?](#)

Interest Rates and Dates to Remember

Selected Interest Rates for November 2014	
90-Day Treasury Bill	.125%
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.75%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.125%
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Emergency Loans	3.75%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (7 years)	2.125%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (10 years)	2.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loans (12 years)	2.500%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.125%

Dates to Remember	
Nov. 15	Final day to report pasture, rangeland, forage & apiculture. <i>(Since the 15th falls on a weekend, reports will be accepted through 11/17).</i>
Nov. 20	NAP application closing date for apples, apricots, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, prunes and blueberries.
Nov. 27	Thanksgiving Day. USDA Service Centers Closed.
Dec. 1	NAP application closing date for honey.
Dec. 1	Last day to return voted County Committee ballots to the local FSA office.
Dec. 5	Extended deadline to enroll for 2014 & 2015 coverage for the Dairy Margin Protection Program.
Dec. 15	Final day to report fall barley, wheat & all other fall-seeded small grains.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).